

comprised over one-third of the total troop strength in this project.

In spite of severe racially discriminatory policies and detestable living and social conditions, the soldiers of the Black Corps of Engineers performed notably and unselfishly on this project.

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Regretfully, since 1942, their contributions toward this country's Western defense during World War II and subsequent integration of the military have been excluded from many of the footnotes of history; but this being the last day we can make presentations during Black History Month, I am delighted and thankful that the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) knew about them and is cosponsoring this resolution.

It is with great pride and honor that I, with the cosponsorship of the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this group of soldiers whose works have existed in the shadows of the Nation's history since 1942, the Army's Black Corps of Engineers; and the Congressional Black Caucus joins me in supporting this. Let me thank again the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CONAWAY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alaska?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 67

Whereas the bombing of Pearl Harbor necessitated constructing an overland route between Alaska and the lower 48 States for military purposes;

Whereas on February 11, 1942, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt authorized the construction of the Alaska-Canada Highway (also known as the "Alcan Highway");

Whereas construction of the Alcan Highway, a 1,522-mile long road from Dawson Creek, Canada, to Fairbanks, Alaska, was an engineering feat of enormous challenge;

Whereas the Alcan Highway was constructed by approximately 10,000 United States troops through rugged, unmapped wilderness and extreme temperatures, ranging from 80-degrees-below to 90-degrees-above zero;

Whereas the Corps of Engineers units assigned to construct the Alcan Highway were segregated by race;

Whereas the 93rd, 95th, and 97th Regiments and 388th Battalion of the Corps of Engineers, part of a group known as the "Black Corps of Engineers", were African American units assigned to the Alcan Highway project, and these units comprised one-third of the total engineering workforce on the project;

Whereas despite severe discriminatory policies, and abominable living and social conditions, the soldiers of the Black Corps of Engineers performed notably and unselfishly on the project;

Whereas on November 20, 1942, the Alcan Highway was completed in an astonishing 8 months and 12 days, becoming one of the Nation's greatest public works projects in the 20th century;

Whereas the Alcan Highway became the only land route that strategically linked the

northern territory to the remainder of the continental United States and facilitated the construction of airstrips for refueling planes and vital supply routes during World War II;

Whereas although considerable praise was bestowed upon soldiers for exemplary work in constructing the Alcan Highway, the soldiers of the Black Corps of Engineers were seldom recognized; and

Whereas despite enduring indignities and double standards, the soldiers of the Black Corps of Engineers contributed unselfishly to the western defense in World War II and these contributions helped lead to the subsequent integration of the military: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress honors the soldiers of the Army's Black Corps of Engineers for their contributions in constructing the Alaska-Canada highway during World War II and recognizes the importance of these contributions to the subsequent integration of the military.*

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

#### APPOINTMENT OF HON. TOM DAVIS OF VIRGINIA TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS THROUGH MARCH 1, 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
February 17, 2005.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM DAVIS to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through March 1, 2005.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointment is approved.

There was no objection.

#### APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 3003 note, and the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe:

Mr. CARDIN, Maryland;  
Ms. SLAUGHTER, New York;  
Mr. HASTINGS, Florida;  
Mr. MCINTYRE, North Carolina.

#### REINING IN THE COST OF MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG ENTITLEMENT

(Mr. FLAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, last week we heard projections that the prescription drug benefit is going to be far more expensive than we figured. Now, many of us never believed that it would cost just \$400 million, and the fact that it is much higher than that is not surprising at all.

I would encourage the President and our leadership to work with us to be able to rein in this monster that we have created.

Over a period of 75 years, the initial estimates were that this would add \$7 trillion in unfunded liabilities. I should point out that every dime to pay for this new benefit is borrowed. Therefore, every dime will be paid for by our kids and our grandkids.

It is time to get the bridle on the horse before the horse leaves the barn, and we need to work now, before this benefit starts next year, to make sure that we can reign in the costs.

Mr. Speaker, last week the White House released budget projections that show that the cost of the prescription drug benefit that Congress added to Medicare last year could balloon to \$1.2 trillion over the next ten years. The initial price estimate of the new entitlement was \$400 billion.

Frankly, the initial estimate of \$400 billion was more than many of us could stomach, but we knew that \$400 billion was a lowball estimate and the real cost was sure to be higher. Having said that, it gives none of us pleasure to say "see, we told you so."

When President Bush first proposed the new prescription drug benefit, it was targeted and means-tested for low-income seniors who did not currently have prescription drug coverage. President Bush's plan also coupled the new benefit with some needed reforms of the Medicare program.

It should come as no surprise that by the time Congress was done with the package, it looked nothing like the President's proposal. Congress expanded coverage to all seniors and yanked the reforms that would have helped curb future costs from the bill.

What does come as a surprise is President Bush's recent threat to veto any attempt by Congress to go back and fix our mistake.

Shortly after Congress passed the new prescription drug entitlement, and the initial cost estimate was already going up, I introduced a bill that would cap the cost of the program at the initial estimate of \$400 billion. If the cost overran the estimate, my bill would have required Congress to offset the difference or scale back the entitlement.

I plan to reintroduce that legislation shortly, and I urge Congress to take it up quickly. Whether or not Congress acts on this specific piece of legislation, we need to begin talking about ways to control the monster we created.

President Bush sent over a budget to Congress a couple of weeks ago that proposed cutting or killing over 150 programs. Of course, Members of Congress immediately began maneuvering to make sure that their pet projects did not get the axe. I think the President is on the right track by trying to pare back congressional spending and I will certainly be doing what I can to help him in that effort. However, the truth is that, compared to federal mandatory spending on entitlement programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social